2: Villiers T-5 (1938-39) 1948 MK2 Maritime Arab MK2
Kuwait MI 1

missed at least another 600, for no list which the dhows supply is really reliable, and each ship carries many persons who are without European documents. As a new dhow arrives, sometimes dozens of her passengers will drop quietly over the side and disperse themselves among the dhows already in the harbour. As with the disposal of the seamen's ventures, all Arabs take a delight, regardless of their ports of origin, in the general defeat of European regulations.

MA 505 484 486 MA [181]

II

At first glance, the whole deep-sea trade in dhows seems unorganized and almost unregulated. In point of fact, it is very well organized indeed, and has a tradition going back, probably, some thousands of years. There is no association of dhow owners in Arabia as there is a Country Craft Organization on the west coast of India, for the Arab of today is too inherently disunited and fiercely individualist to make this type of co-operation possible. But he can organize his own trade very well, nevertheless. The typical wealthy business family of Kuwait maintains offices, almost always managed by sons of the house who frequently rotate on the circuit, in all the more important centers of Arab coastal trade. The head office is at Kuwait or perhaps Basra, with branches at Aden (in the Crater, not at Steamer Point), Bombay, possibly one other west coast of India port, and Mukalla. Where there is not an actual branch of the family conducting business on a permanent footing, there is either a trusted agent (probably a relative), or one of the younger sons sent in the trading season to watch the family interests. This, for instance, is done at Berbera, in British Somaliland, which, when times are good, can absorb a surprising quantity of Iraqi dates carried there in dhows. The agent or family member is primarily responsible for the collection of debts — always a problem in a trade which is carried on without banking. A family carrying on business on such a scale will have a finger in perhaps a score big dhows, all nominally "owned" by their own *nakhodas*. The cash resources of some of these families must be enormous, and behind them stands the Sheikh of Kuwait, who was a wealthy man even before oil was discovered in his territory.

K MA 505 441 MA [181] K MA 472 K MA 453 426 K [643]

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Maritime Arabs NK2

trade, the profits of a sailing boat have diminished and the percentage of the population that supports itself this way is very small.

However, since all the food and clothing of the community must be imported, and in places even the water and building material, trade in the Persian Gulf reaches large proportions. Rice is imported by hundreds of thousands of sacks each year. A special steamer of the Standard Oil Company brings kerosene oil from New York. There is a large importation of the stronger and cheaper grades of foreign cloth. The rice and kerosene and the various imports from India, such as dishes and lanterns and all sorts of gaudy trinkets, are brought in steamers. The British India Steamship Company has a line of coasting steamers which call every week at the larger Gulf ports. Some food materials are brought from Mesopotamia and from Persia, and these smaller importations from near-by ports are often brought in sail boats. All of these imports are paid for indirectly with pearls. The last season before the Great War the value of the pearls marketed in Bahrein was estimated at three *crores* or about $9,000,000.

There are no merchants in the whole peninsula that are so rich as the pearl merchants of the East Coast. There are a few of these merchants that could rank as millionaires if their fortunes were measured in American money. These men are more or less educated and have traveled extensively. Many of them take newspapers and read modern books. Their establishments are places of great luxury and comfort, with many of the outward signs of modern civilization. Their houses and offices may be lit by electric lights, and their taste extends even to motor launches and automobiles. The larger ports of

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Maritime Arabs Mkz

The larger ports of Kuwait, Bahrein and Dibai have also a large community of artisans and lesser merchants. These serve not simply the local diving population, but also act as manufacturers and wholesalers for the whole of Central Arabia. Practically the entire import and export trade for the interior of the peninsula goes through these three towns, and the merchant and artisan communities are large and prosperous.

It is difficult to be optimistic about the general situation in these pearl-diving communities. The actual material condition of the divers is bad enough, but worse by far is the discouragement and despair that have settled down upon the whole community. No one tries very hard to get out of debt, for he knows that barring some unforeseen miracle, he cannot do so no matter how long and hard he works and how economically he lives. There is little thrift; a stranger is often shocked by the waste that divers show in their personal and household expenditures. There is not the slightest effort, for instance, to discover what sort of clothing will give the most service for the money invested. Expensive or cheap, economical or wasteful, it is all the same. With luck when the present supply of money is gone, the captain will make another liberal allowance, and nothing better than that can be hoped for, no matter what economy and thrift are practised.

The conditions outlined above are those that obtain in the northern towns, chiefly in Bahrein. There is a second large diving community in the region known as the Pirate Coast, whose capital and largest city is Dibai. Its piratical character is a matter of history now long past, but it still makes a good deal of trouble for the British who police the Gulf and maintain order along the coast.